



Contact: Chris Gale, Director of Communications
(201) 460-4692 christopher.gale@njmeadowlands.gov

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NMJC Proposes Solar Energy Farm for 32-Square Mile Meadowlands District

LYNDHURST, N.J. – The New Jersey Meadowlands Commission today approved a study that could establish a solar energy farm across the 32-square mile Meadowlands District with the potential to generate renewable energy for local homes and businesses. The study would constitute one of the most comprehensive steps in the Commission's range of initiatives aimed at ensuring a sustainable future for the Meadowlands District.

"This proposal will help bring together the environmental and economic potential of the District to an even greater degree than before, while helping reduce our dependency on energy sources that invariably take from the environment," said NJMC Chairman and New Jersey Department of Community Affairs Acting Commissioner Charles A. Richman.

The Board instructed staff to undertake a 60-day study on the possibility of establishing a pilot 5-megawatt ground-mounted photovoltaic (PV) project in the Meadowlands District. Staff will examine locations like warehouse rooftops and remediated landfills as possible sites to construct a solar energy farm for the Meadowlands District.

The study will also test the District's ability to achieve energy independence using renewable resources on a regional level, rather than a piecemeal building-by-building approach, by creating partnerships with municipalities and businesses in the Meadowlands District.

The partnerships could lead to the implementation of a larger PV infrastructure grid.

The goals of this program are to bring a less costly renewable energy source to the region, create a seedbed in New Jersey for the development of this technology, increase competitiveness for industry in the District, ease demand on electric infrastructures and reduce the demand on fossil fuels. The NJMC will work with the state Board of Public Utilities for financial incentives for these projects.

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“Time and time again, we are proving that the Meadowlands is turning what was perceived as a useless wasteland into an area for new and unique avenues for economic and environmental potential,” said NJMC Executive Director Robert Ceberio. “We may have the ability to turn acres of defunct landfills and warehouse and office roofs into places that can generate pooled sources of renewable energy for the Meadowlands District. Not only will we double the positive outcome from using our developed land wisely, but we will work together with our towns and businesses to take a proactive approach to bringing this innovative technology into the Meadowlands.”

Today’s action follows the multi-agency Meadowlands Green Building Summit held in November. In addition to the solar energy initiative, the NJMC is working toward regulations that will expedite permitting and offer discounts in application fees if a proposed development project for the District is a certified Green Building project. Green Building projects are designed to diminish environmental impact and increase earth-friendly practices with their corresponding benefits to tenants and owners.

The NJMC is also creating a Sustainable Meadowlands Resource Institute to increase green building redevelopment and retrofitting in the Meadowlands District through a partnership-based model with business leaders. These actions are in addition to a partnership with the U.S. Green Building Council to hold an intensive workshop for developers, draft green building design guidelines for the Meadowlands Master Plan, and pursue green building standards for the NJMC’s existing operations and expanded campus.

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